A

LETTER

WRITTEN BY

Mr. *ROBERT KNIGHT*,

FROM

ROME.

JANUARY 22, 1721-2.

To the E— of ——.

As ſoon as Mr. KNIGHT *had folded up this Letter, the Meſſenger from the* Pope *ſeized it. The* Pope *ſent a Copy of it to the Pretender, and ſeveral other Perſons of Diſtinction, and it is now ſpread over moſt Parts of* Europe.

MY LORD,

I Beg leave to inform your Lordſhip, that this Inſtant one of the *Pope*'s Officers is come to me, by Order of the Governor, to warn me out of Town before Night, or to Priſon, with Directions to him, as he ſays, to ſee the One or the Other executed. He gives me to underſtand, that this Stroke comes from the *Pretender*, and that if I have the Misfortune of being once clos'd up, I am not like to get out, untill I give a good and ſatisfactory Account of my Buſineſs to this City. Whilſt my Things are a packing up, I make uſe of the ſmall Space afforded me, to acquaint your Lordſhip, with this Misfortune which has befallen me, and diſconcerted all our Meaſures, yet, without any Fault of mine, as your Lordſhip will judge from the following Particulars.

The very Day I came to Town, I was diſcovered by one of the *Pretender*'s Waiters, who had known me in *England*, by whom, the News of my Arrival became immediately common in Town. This, diſcompos'd my Reſolution of coming at the *Pretender*, in a Private and preventing Manner, and determined me to ſend for Doctor *Berkley*, one of his Proteſtant Chaplains, I explained to him my Deſign of fixing my Abode at *Rome*, as the only Secure Refuge left me in the Chriſtian World, from the Purſuits of a Tyranical Government, and that it would be no ſmall Comfort to me, to have Admittance to *Divine Service* in the Chappel held by the *Pretender* for that Purpoſe: His Anſwer was, That I being a Perſon very much noted, he dar'd not take upon him to admit me without the *King*'s Leave, (for ſo he term'd him), and asked me, what I would have him ſay to the *King*? I deſired him to have my Duties offered in a moſt reſpectful Manner, as from One, who had always wiſh'd well to the Cauſe, that was joyful to find the Occaſion of ſubmitting to the Protection of his *RIGHTFUL PRINCE*, and in a Situation of rendering Service. Some Days paſſed, that I had no Return from the *Doctor*, which, with ſome Enquiries of the Town Officers about me, made me write him a Note, for an Anſwer of my Meſſage. I really thought, my *Lord*, that I ſhould not have been compelled to Solicit a ſecond Time for a Reception, but rather courted to come; yet, I made no Caſe of this Backwardneſs, which I judg'd accidental,

The *Doctor* came and told me by the *King*'s Orders, (as he ſaid) Provided I came with a full Reſolution of aſſuming Fair and Plain Dealing, I ſhould have not only the Liberty of the Chapel, but alſo of the *King*'s Preſence, and that he came with Directions on thoſe Terms, to introduce me to private Audience. I comply'd readily to all, and, as I was going along, the *Doctor* warned me, that I was to deal with one of the ſharpeſt and moſt penetrating, not only of *Princes*, but of Men; who reads the Minds of People in their Looks. I made no great Matter of this Caution, after the many Dealings I had been inur'd to, with the moſt ſubtle People in *England*.

However, I muſt own, My *Lord*, that either the Figure or Idea of the Man, ſtruck me at firſt, into ſome Diſorder, and a certain Palpitation of the Heart, which laſted a little Time, A very courteous and ſmiling Reception gave me Time to ſurmount this Weakneſs. The Converſation turned on General Affairs, in a moſt moderate Manner, with a great

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deal of my own particular Caſe, between a Government that was not ſufficient to ſupport me, and a People that Perſecuted me at Home and Abroad, for Facts I had but a Share in, with many others who enjoy full Freedom. He dropt now and then in the mildeſt Manner, ſome Queſtions that were extreme puzling, and ſeem'd ſatisfied with my Anſwers, ſuch as they were, I can't avoid particularizing one of them, Pray, Mr. *Knight*, ſaid he, if it be true, as I have it commonly reported, That every Thing is carried by Force of Money in *England*, how comes it, that being Maſter of a great Store, as I ſuppoſe you are, you have not prevailed to purchaſe your Security, I reply'd, that I thought I had done it, but found my ſelf miſtaken. I muſt then conclude, ſaid he, That Corruption had ſeiz'd but ſome Degrees of the Kingdom, and that the Honeſty of the People ſtill breaks thro' the prevalent Maxim of Intereſt, from whence it is to be inferr'd, That nothing is Sick in that Body, but the Head.

He then roſe up, and told me, he hoped I came hither with a good Stock of honeſt Intentions, to which, any Thing that depended on him wou'd not be wanting; yes, Sir, ſaid I, and with an Offer of ſomething more that may be wanting, to forward your Affairs; he parted, in telling me, That the *Doctor* would call upon me next Day, and that he wou'd Diſcourſe more particularly of Matters,

I went Home very well ſatisfy'd in Mind, after ſuch a gracious Converſation, and perſwaded, that my laſt Propoſal cou'd not but be very acceptable, to a Perſon charg'd here with a numerous Family and Dependants, beſides thoſe elſe where whom he Supplies, and for whoſe Relief he was oblig'd at this very Time, as I was aſſur'd, to Pledge his *Conſorts* Jewels. I became ſo full of this Confidence, that I made ſure State of fixing next Day, a Correſpondence on the Footing your Lordſhip recommended; to make you Maſter of all his Secrets, he himſelf had opened the Road for me, by ſpeaking much of your Lordſhip's excellent Qualifications and Capacity for Buſineſs, ſufficient to render a Kingdom happy, if all this had been directed by juſt Principles, upon which, I aſſur'd, your Lordſhips Principles were much different from what they appear'd, and wanted only bringing Matters to a right Underſtanding; I went with much Aſſurance and very well Prepared, as I thought, to next Days Converſation; the *Pretender* was very punctual to the Hour appointed, as they ſay, he is on all Occaſions, after we were Seated he deſired I ſhould hear him out, and ſpoke to this Purpoſe.

Mr. *Knight*, as this is the Beginning of our Acquaintance, which may hold long, if you pleaſe, its fit I ſhould inform you, that I have from Nature and Education, a mortal Averſion for *Lyars*, *Cheats*, and *Diſſemblers*; that after the many Tryals I made of ſuch, in different Countries, I ſhould be more blamed than another, if I happen to be impoſed upon; you have Reaſon to be convinc'd, that you have been miſlead by ſuperior Craft and Authority, which made an Inſtrument of you to Work out the Deſtruction of your Country, Its beyond your Power to Repair all the Misfortunes that proceeded from the late unhappy Managements, but you can, in a great Meaſure, diſcharge your ſelf of the common Guilt and Cry, by unfoulding the Miſtery of Iniquity whereof you have been Depoſitary, and by giving up the Papers you have laid aſide, into the Hands of Lord *Maleſworth* for the Publick Uſe. I Name that Lord, as One, whoſe Principles are impartial and upright to all Men but his Lawful Prince, this I do require from you as the Foundation of our Friendſhip, do not expect that any Offer you can make me, Accrewing from the Subſtance of the *Widow* and *Orphan*, or that can be ſuſpected to be ſo, can prevail to alter my Reſolution, if you be really come hither with honeſt Intentions, doing what I deſire ſhould give you no Pain, and it would do me ſingular Service; if you be not diſpoſed to comply, I forgive you, any bad Deſign you may have conceiv'd towards me, but if I can, you ſhall have no Refuge where-ever I will have any Authority. I do not ask a ſudden Anſwer from you, take three Days to conſider of it, after which I prefix you to Facts, and not to Words.

After ſaying this, he retired happily for me, for I do not know yet what Anſwer I cou'd have made him, my Confuſion was the ſame, as if ſtruck with a Thunder-bolt, and I am ſure, he cou'd not miſs perceiving it, whilſt he was ſpeaking to me, and had his Eyes fixt upon me; the *Doctor* came to bring me of, and the three Days paſt before I cou'd hit upon any Colourable Scheme, to come in upon the Path your *Lordſhip* order'd me to follow; I own and beg Pardon for my Weakneſs, but I found my ſelf unable to Purſue it further. I had but one String left to my Bow, which was, your Lordſhips Letter to the *Imperial Embaſſador* for Protection, to remain in Town, in hopes of being ſtill Serviceable, it was granted me, but has been, I find, too Weak to withſtand the Power of the adverſe Party, and am now compel'd to make Uſe of the ſame Paper, for my Journey to *Naples* or *Venice*: I know not yet well which is beſt for me to take, all Choices are bad, ſince I am removed from hence, which is the only Place where I could reckon my ſelf under Shelter, from the Demands of thoſe who Perſecute me, and by which, your *Lordſhip* ſtood eaſy againſt all Applications that ſhould be made there in Reference to me. I hope, however, your *Lordſhip* will not abandon me, having no other Branch to ſtick by for my Security, and pleaſe to conſider, that its better being out of the World, than to remain perpetually under the Frights of Perſecution and Impriſonment. I beg the Favour of your Lordſhips Commands by the former Addreſs at *Venice*, and that you will own me to be, *My Lord*,

Your LORDSHIP'S *moſt Faithful*,
tho' unfortunate Servant,
ROBERT KNIGHT.